

THE
SCRIPTURE-LOYALIST

CONTAINING
A VINDICATION OF OBEDIENCE

TO THE PRESENT
Civil BRITISH Government in Things Lawful;

1507/1307

DEFENCE of several Passages of Holy Scripture,
from gross Abuse and Misrepresentation;

AND

An ANSWER to ignorant and sophistical Cavils
against Subjection to said Government, in its lawful
Commands.

*Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey
magistrates, to be ready to every good work, Tit. iii. 1.*

GLASGOW

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M DCC LXXXIV.

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

Containing some things to be carefully observed by the Reader.

I. **I**T is not a *slavish* subjection to the despotic authority of *cruel tyrants* and *usurpers*, which is defended in the following pages. Our present civil rulers, supreme and subordinate, are so far from being usurpers, that they rule by the voluntary consent of the body politic; and they are so far from being cruel tyrants, that they are the guardians of our lives, liberties, and properties.—Some affirm, and perhaps very justly, that the British subjects are under a better civil government, than any other people in the world. And here we may observe, that there is a vast difference between the situation of the sufferers in the late persecuting period, and our present situation; yea, as great a difference, as between cruel bondage and precious liberty. The question with them about civil government was this, Whether a people, long oppressed with the encroachments of tyrants and usurpers, may disown their pretended authority; and when imposed upon to acknowledge it, may rather chuse to suffer, than to own it? * But the question about civil government with us is this, Whether a people may disown the authority of magistrates, who have long protected, and are still continuing to protect, their lives and liberties? The scope of the following pages is to shew, that they may not.—Let it be farther observed here, that it is a most fallacious, and an absurd way of reasoning, to make the practice of the sufferers a precedent for disowning the present civil government. Because they disowned the authority of rulers, whose government was a plague to them, can it ever follow from hence, by any parity of reason, that we may reject the authority of rulers, whose government is an invaluable blessing to us? Is there no difference between the iron rod of an oppressing and murdering tyrant, and the gentle sceptre of a gracious prince?—Are the successors of the late



noble army of martyrs in Scotland, it is certain, that they who disown the present civil government cannot be such.

2. It is not an *unlimited* subjection to the present government, which I design to defend, but a subjection *in the Lord*. When obedience to the commands of princes would be a transgression of the law of Christ, they ought to be disobeyed. In all ages, the saints have been sacred rescuants, when the will of their superiors on earth clashed with the will of the highest Lord. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego despised the menaces of king Nebuchadnezzar, and would not worship his god of gold, though a fiery furnace, heated seven-fold, was before their eyes. *Be it known, said they, unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.* And when the Jewish council commanded the apostles, not to speak at all, nor to teach in the name of Jesus, Peter and John answered and said unto them, *Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.*

3. Nothing is said in the following pages with a design to favour the servile doctrine of *passive obedience*. When princes grasp at an absolute power to dispose of the lives and properties of their subjects, and when they become habitually cruel and tyrannical, the people who set them on their thrones ought to depose them, and put men in their place, who fear God, and hate covetousness. To teach that mankind should bear the yoke of oppression, when they have power to throw it off, that they should remain slaves, when they can procure their liberty by lawful means, is a doctrine so contrary to the natural principles of self-preservation, to scripture and common sense, that it deserves no refutation.

4. The topic defended in the following sheets is precisely this, That obedience is due to the *present civil British government* in its *lawful commands*. The reformed Presbytery have taught in their Testimony, and its vindications, That obedience is *not due* to said government in its lawful commands; and herein they differ in their political principles from all other Presbyterians in Scotland. But if the faith of the reader, about subjection to civil ru-

lers, stand not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, he will see, that the doctrine of obedience, to the present civil government in the Lord, is proven, in the following pages, beyond all reasonable contradiction; and that the doctrine of disowning said government, in its lawful commands, is directly opposite to the doctrine and practice of prophets, of apostles, and of Christ Jesus the Lord.

I defy any man to prove, either by exprefs scripture, or by fair and necessary consequences deduced from it, That it is the duty of Christians to disown the authority of Christian magistrates, under whose government they enjoy their natural, civil, and religious privileges, and may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

I heartily wish, that grace may be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; and that Christians of all denominations may embrace no principles, how ever specious, which cannot be supported by a *Thus saith the Lord*.

T H E

SCRIPTURE-LOYALIST.

S E C T. I.

*SUBJECTION to the present British Government, in things
lawful, warranted by the Precepts of the Divine Law.*

NO book was ever so much abused, as the volume of inspiration. Blaspheming Deists deny the divine authority of the holy oracles, and are not ashamed to call the gospel of Christ, a cunningly devised fable. The church of Rome, which God hath given up, in righteous judgment, to strong delusion, that she should believe a lie, denies the perfection of the holy scriptures, and therefore adds unto them her unwritten traditions, and the decrees of Popes and Councils. Brain-sick Quakers, and other deluded enthusiasts, dream that the light within them, without the written word, is a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

Many, who profess to abhor these abuses of the divine word, practically trample on it's precepts, without shame or remorse. They break the first commandment of the moral law, by loving the world more than God.—The second, by a criminal neglect of, or a careless attendance on such religious worship and ordinances, as God hath appointed in his word.—The third and fourth, by profaning God's name and day.—And the fifth, by disobedience to the just and lawful authority of parents, masters, ministers, and magistrates. Every man hath a pope in his own heart, he loves domination, but hates subjection. To bridle this domineering man of sin, the supreme Lawgiver says to children, "Obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right."—To servants, "Be subject to

your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward."—To church members, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account."—And to the inhabitants of a kingdom or commonwealth, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme," &c.

You may see, reader, from the title of this little piece, that you are not to be directed to acts of parliament, made in favour of religion, for a solution of this question. Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not; but to a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place. I am no enemy to civil securities given to religion, but am persuaded, that a superstitious regard to these, have seduced some serious people into antiscritural notions about obedience to civil rulers. The following divine precepts, understood in their plain and obvious meaning, will reach conviction to every unprejudiced mind, that obedience, in all things lawful, is due to our present civil rulers.

I. Matth. xxii. 21. "Render therefore unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God, the things that are God's." The argument from this precept, for obedience to our present civil rulers, is plain. If it was the duty of the church and nation of the Jews to pay tribute to Cæsar, the heathen Roman emperor, a wicked idolater, surely it can never be our sin to pay tribute to Christian rulers. Judea was now become a province of the Roman empire, being conquered by force of arms; and if Christ commanded the Jews to pay tribute to their conquerors, ought not we to pay tribute to those who rule over us by our own voluntary consent? To evade the force of the argument contained in this precept, some tell us, That Christ gave an answer which left Cæsar's claim unresolved; that he neither expressly says it is lawful or unlawful to pay it. Testimony of the reformed presbytery, page 149. This, not to call it worse, is a very unadvised exposition; for, if Cæsar's

claim be unresolved, then God's claim must be so too. The arguments to support this modern exposition, are by no means conclusive; like the apples of Sodom, they may please the eye, but when handled, moulder into dust. The authors of this new gloss, alledge the following things in support of it.

1. That the question was *captious*. No doubt, the question asked at Christ was captious; for it was asked, as the evangelist tells us, That "they might take hold of his words," that so they might deliver him into the power and authority of the governor. But it will never follow from the base design of this question, that Christ declined to tell the truth in a matter of sin and duty. We find Christ, on another occasion, boldly sending a message to Herod, and calling him a *fox*: "Go tell that fox, &c." And, can we think, that, on this occasion, he was more afraid of Cæsar, than his underling? It is equal with him, who is armed with omnipotence, and whose "kingdom ruleth over all," to bridle the roaring lion, and disappoint the crafty fox. — Besides this, none of his enemies could hurt him, till his time should come. The fear of man, is often a snare to the cowardly sons of men; but it could be no snare to the Son of God. Let it never be insinuate among Christians, that the great God, our Saviour, durst not tell the truth through fear of a man that shall die, and of the son of man who shall be made as grass.

2. It is alledged, That infinite wisdom shone forth, in giving such an answer, as declared their wisdom to be but folly, and at once disappointed all their malicious hopes. It is granted, that infinite wisdom shone forth, in all that Christ did, and said, and in this answer too; but it follows not from the wisdom of this answer, that Cæsar's claim was unresolved: nay, if it left his claim unresolved, it was so far from having infinite wisdom in it, that it had neither the wisdom of the serpent, nor the innocence of the dove. Though the question asked at Christ, was intended to ensnare him in his words, yet it respected sin and duty, which was a clear call to give a decisive answer. Either it was lawful to pay tribute to

Cæsar, or unlawful: If it was lawful, then, according to the new interpretation, Christ left the Jews at liberty to with-hold from Cæsar his due, or to break that precept of the divine law, which says, "Render therefore to all their dues: Tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom." If it was unlawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, then Christ left the Jews at liberty, to live in a breach of the divine law; for, at this time, they did pay tribute to Cæsar, as their whole nation had done to their Roman emperors, for many years past. Therefore, if Christ left Cæsar's claim unresolved, his answer was far more insnaring than the question asked at him. The question asked, was calculated to bring Christ into the punishing power of the Roman governor; the answer given, was calculated to bring the Jews into the punishing power of Jehovah, while it left them to act as they pleased, in a matter of sin and duty. The Jews rendered evil to Christ, by seeking to ensnare him in his words; and, according to their exposition, Christ rendered evil to the Jews, by seeking to ensnare them in their words.

This exposition, therefore, must not be admitted; for it represents Christ as rendering evil for evil, a sin which he himself hath expressly forbidden. And besides this, it represents the infinitely wise Lawgiver as leaving a precept to the church, which is altogether useless; an express command, in which no sin is forbidden, and no duty enjoined. They must be eagle-eyed expositors indeed, who see wisdom, and infinite wisdom, in a precept of this sort.—Were you to tell a Deist, that when Christ says, "Render therefore unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsars," he neither enjoins a duty, nor forbids a sin, might he not reply, That the moral sayings of the seven wise men of Greece, or the dark responses of a heathen oracle, are preferable to this precept of the Christian religion?—Alas! that Christians should give such occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. It is often seen, that other people, besides Papists, know how to make the word of God, a nose of wax, and even to allow it no meaning at all, when it wears an evident frown in its

face to their favourite notions. "We have no authority, says one, to stretch out a word of divine revelation, or to shrivel it up." A curse is pronounced on those, who either add to his words, or diminish from them; and surely, to alledge that they have no sense at all, is to diminish from them. Debasing a text, is as bad as expunging it. I would as soon strike out the sound as the sense, and deny the letter as dead, in the spirit of any verse in the Bible.

3. To support their new sense, or rather, no sense, of this precept, they tell us, That Cæsar was a proud, aspiring, idolatrous, and bloody usurper, having no other right to the most part of his dominions, than the Lord's providential disposal, which sometimes makes the tabernacles of robbers to prosper;—into whose hands, God bringeth abundantly. Suppose this Cæsar to be an usurper (which some have denied) as a well as a proud, idolatrous, and bloody man; it follows not from hence, that Christ commanded not the Jews to pay tribute to him. Nebuchadnezzar, the famed king of Babylon, possessed his dominions, by the Lord's providential disposal, as well as Cæsar; he was an idolater as well as Cæsar, and nothing behind him in pride: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my Majesty?" And as to cruelty, none could exceed him, "He slew their young men with the sword, in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man, nor maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age," 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17.—Now, God expressly commanded Israel, to be subject to this wicked monster. "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live," Jer. xxvii. 12. In opposition to this command, many of them went into Egypt, and died there, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, Jeremiah xlii. 17.—The wickedness of Cæsar then, doth by no means prove, that Christ did not command the Jews to give tribute unto him. The Lord's providential disposal, made the tabernacles of Nebuchad-

nezzar the robber, to prosper, as well as the tabernacles of Cæsar the robber. He who, for their sins, gave Israel to Nebuchadnezzar the robber, gave the same rebellious people to Cæsar the robber. And why should not the people of God be subject to robbers, in all things lawful, at God's bidding? He who said, "Serve the king of Babylon," said also, "Render unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar's." And when God, as a just punishment of their sins, makes strangers to rule over them, ought they not to say, "We will bear the indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against him?"

4. To support their new gloss, we are told, That the Jews could not consent to Cæsar's authority, but in express contradiction to many plain and positive scripture precepts, enjoining them to chuse one of their own nation and religion to be their king. This is a most unguarded assertion; for, if it is true, it is true also, that God commanded Israel expressly to contradict his own law, when he commanded them to bring their necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon. God gave Israel precepts enjoining them to set one of their brethren over them; and, as far as I know, they observed these precepts exactly in the letter of them. They would have contradicted these precepts, if they had chosen one of another nation and religion to be their king; but it was no contradiction to these precepts, to obey heathen kings, in all things lawful, when, as a just punishment of their sins, they became a conquered nation, and it was not in their power to have a king of their own nation and religion.

5. We are told, That it is *violence* done to the text, (as also opposite to the sentiments of some eminent divines on the place) to say, that it contains a *command* to pay tribute to Cæsar.—To say, that this text leaves Cæsar's claim unresolved, that Christ neither says it is lawful or unlawful to pay tribute to him, is to deprive the text of sense altogether, which is far greater violence done it, than to say, that it contains a command to pay tribute to Cæsar. And, the reformed presbyters excepted, we know no eminent divines, nor commentators, who deny, that

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this text contains a command to pay tribute to Cæsar; or, in other words, who strip it of any meaning, and so reckon it a mere cypher in the volume of inspiration.

6. We are told, That the Jews did not understand this text, as a command to pay tribute to Cæsar, as would appear from Luke xxiii. 2. "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar." We formerly heard of some eminent divines; here we have eminent divines with a witness, doctors of Satan's dubbing! Are the false witnesses, the accusers, the perverters of the words of the Lord of glory, also among the prophets! Be it so, that these wretches did not understand this text, as a command to pay tribute to Cæsar, it will not follow, that it was not a command. If they had any respect to this text, when they accused Christ, they understood it as a prohibition; and their commentary on it, is plainly this, that Christ forbade to give tribute to Cæsar, when he said, "Render therefore unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar's." Will the reformed presbytery subscribe this commentary? Will they say, that the malicious Jews spake the truth, when they said, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar?" If they will not, then let them extrude the accusers of Christ, from the number of their orthodox commentators.

7. We are told, That this is not the only instance, where our Lord, in infinite wisdom, declined to give direct answers to the ensnaring questions of his malicious enemies. John viii. 3,—12. Matth. xxi. 23,—28. John xviii. 19, 20, 21. Testimony, page 150. To this it might be sufficient to reply, That whatever answers Christ gave to the ensnaring questions of his enemies, he never gave an ensnaring answer, an answer which left them to the freedom of their own will, in a matter of sin and duty, and such an answer was that to the question about tribute, in the reformed sense of it. But, granting that our Lord sometimes did decline, to give direct answers to the ensnaring questions of his enemies, it will never follow from hence, by any just rules of reasoning, that

he declined to answer the captious question about tribute. Nay, we find him giving a most plain and determinate answer to as captious a question, as that about tribute could be. When Pilate asked him, "Art thou the king of the Jews?"—Jesus answering, said unto him, "Thou sayest it," Mark xv. 2.—And when the Scribes and Pharisees asked him, "Art thou then the Son of God?"—And he said unto them, "Ye say that I am." And they said, "What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth." Therefore, we take our Lord's answer, to the question about tribute, for a plain and positive answer, and affirm, That this is not the only instance, where he, in infinite wisdom, gave direct answers to the ensnaring questions of his malicious enemies.

As to the instances alledged, for supporting the indeterminate sense of the answer to the question about tribute; it is evident, that in these instances, our Lord gave no dubious answers to the ensnaring questions of his enemies, in matters of sin and duty, and therefore will never prove, that he gave a dubious answer to the question about tribute. When the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him the woman taken in adultery, and said unto him, "Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou?" He did not say, You may keep, or break the law of Moses, in this matter, as you please. He did not condemn the woman taken in adultery, because this was not his business, his kingdom not being of this world. But, as the great Minister of the New Testament, he convinced his adversaries of sin; but gave them no dubious, no ensnaring answers, in matters of sin and duty. And there is as little in the other two instances, as in this, to support the doubtful sense of the answer to the question about tribute.—When the chief priests and elders asked Christ, "By what authority dost thou these things?" And who gave thee this authority?" And when they would not answer the question, which Christ asked them about the baptism of John, he answered, not doubtfully, but plainly; "Neither tell I you by what authority I do

“ these things.” He gave no answer to their question at all; and therefore did not give an indeterminate one. Nor did Christ, by refusing to answer their question, leave them in the dark about his authority, his divine Sonship and mission; for he had plainly told them, on other occasions, that he was the Son of God, and Saviour of the world. John vi. 27. *Labour for that meat which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed.* Ver. 51. *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.* John x. 36. *Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest? because I said, I am the Son of God.* And though the answers, which Christ gave to the captious questions of the high priest, were not direct, yet there is nothing indeterminate or dubious in them.

When the high priest asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine, Jesus answered him, *I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whether the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing, why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said.* Now, tho’ these are not direct, yet they are plain answers. There is nothing dark, or doubtful, or indeterminate in them, no matter of sin or duty left unresolved; and therefore can never prove, that Christ neither enjoined a duty, nor forbade a sin, when he said, *Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s.*

But after all the pains the Reformed Presbytery have been at, to prove that this text hath no meaning, That Christ neither expressly says it is lawful or unlawful to pay tribute to Cæsar; that it contains no command to pay tribute to Cæsar, they themselves have given it a very odd sense. P. 150. of their testimony they say, “ So, that by looking unto the divine law, which determines every one’s due, according to their just character, and of which they [the Jews] could not be ignorant, they might see, that he [Cæsar] had a just title to all that was due to an usurper, idolater, and murderer.” They deny, that this text contains a command to pay tribute to

Cæsar, here they grant, that it contains a command or at least an allowance to kill Cæsar. According to them the sense of this text is, *Render therefore unto Cæsar a halter and a gallows; which is a forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar with a witness.* Did the Reformed Presbytery know, that they had born false witness against Christ, when this false interpretation dropt from their pen? Did they know, that they had been treading in the same path with the accusers of the Lord of glory; if the reformed sense of this text is true, the sense which the accusers of Christ put upon it, is true also, *We found this fellow, said the accusers of Christ, perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar.* And we found him, says the reformed Presbytery, or at least insinuating, that its lawful to kill Cæsar. This last commentary is a virtual approbation of the first; or that the Jews spake true, when they said, that Christ forbade to give tribute to Cæsar; for if he taught that it was lawful to kill Cæsar, he forbade to give tribute to him with a witness. Alas! that Christian commentators should be found among the false witnesses, who rose up against Christ; and laid to his charge things that he knew not.

II. We have a clear warrant for subjection to the present civil government, in all things lawful, in Rom. xiii. 1. *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers: for there is no power but of God, &c.* Sir, said the servants of the household-er, *didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?* The householder said unto them, *An enemy hath done this.* When the apostles of Christ sowed the good seed of the word in the famous Metropolis of the Roman Empire, Satan sowed the tares of disloyalty to civil rulers, which sprung up almost as early, as the precious seed. Therefore, the design of the apostle, as all commentators have observed, in this and the six following verses, is to curb an evil spirit of rebellion, which was lifting up its head in a church, whose faith was spoken of throughout the whole world. Commentators have observed also, that the apostle here is exhorting the Christians at Rome, to be subject to the Roman Emperor, and other inferior rulers. Now, if the Holy Ghost com-

manded the Christians at Rome, whether Jews or Gentiles, to be subject to the heathen magistrates, and that under the pain of damnation, ought not we to be subject to magistrates who are professed, and no doubt many of them true Christians? This is so plain, that one would think a man in his right wits would not deny it. This precept, is none of Paul's sayings, in which are some things hard to be understood, but it is a plain precept, as all precepts generally are. The meaning of it is so plain, that he who runs may read it. But plain as this precept is, a late expositor hath rendered it truly mysterious, by giving it a new, and strange gloss. He positively denies, that the apostle is here exhorting the Christians at Rome to be subject to the heathen Emperor, and governors under him. He tells us, "That when the apostle says, *There is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God*: he certainly means, either the office of magistracy in all it's different branches in the abstract, or else the office filled with virtuous rulers only *."

This Exposition is the fruit, either of the strongest prejudice, or of the most wilful ignorance. Some think, it's as easy to swallow, and digest a camel, or to drink in the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation, as to believe the truth of said exposition. Nay, it is not credible, how Mr. M'Millan, or any other man in his right mind, can believe it to be true. The first sense represents the apostle as speaking perfect jargon and nonsense. That the apostle is here exhorting to an act of obedience cannot be disputed; for, he expressly says, *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers*. Now, if by *the power*, and the *powers that be*, are meant magistracy in the abstract, then the apostle must be enjoining an act of subjection on the Romans neither toward God nor man, but toward magistracy in the abstract. And so the apostle's exhortation here, and the motives to enforce it, might be paraphrased thus, Let every one of you christians in the church of Rome, be subject to magistracy in the abstract; for magistracy in the abstract is ordained of God. Magistra-

* See Mr. M'Millan's letter to Messrs. Belfrage, &c. p. 58, 59.

cy in the abstract is not a terror to the good works, but to the evil. Magistracy in the abstract is the minister of God, and beareth not the sword in vain. Magistracy in the abstract is a revenger. Therefore pay tribute, render dues, custom, fear, honour, to the office of magistracy in all it's different branches in the abstract.

As this sense is absurd in the highest degree, and a manifest disgrace to a master in Israel; so the other sense is utterly false, viz. That the apostle means the office of magistracy filled with virtuous rulers, for there were no such rulers in Paul's day, nor for three hundred years after it. That the apostle means the then heathen rulers is unquestionably evident from his own words, *The powers that be*. Had he meant virtuous rulers, he would certainly have said, the powers that will be three hundred years hence. If Paul is not here exhorting the christians at Rome to be subject to the civil powers which then were, his exhortation, and motives to enforce it, could be of as little use to them, and to the churches of Christ four hundreds of years after them, as threshing the water, or beating the air. No man can tell for what end the apostle says to the church of Rome, *Let every soul of you be subject to the higher powers*, if it was not to direct them, how to behave towards the civil rulers, which then were. These words, *The powers that be*, are to the reformed Presbytery as a serpent by the way, an adder in the path; that biteth the horses heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. Being conscious, that this serpent will bite without enchantment, they have carefully avoided to rouse it up. Mr. M'Millan jun. hath indeed awakened this adder in the path; and as Saul of Tarsus dealt with the faints, hath compelled it to blaspheme, or to speak words, which are a reproach to the wisdom of the Spirit of inspiration. To say, that *by the powers that be* is meant magistracy in the abstract, is to make the Holy Ghost assert absurdity. To say that virtuous rulers are meant, is to make the Spirit of God maintain, that the then rulers were virtuous, which is a notorious falsehood. To hear the mother of harlots, and her deluded followers, who are drunk with the wine of her fornication, torturing the

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Scriptures, and compelling them to support their doctrines of devils, is no wonder at all, *Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved: And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie.* But to find the highest pretenders among presbyterians to orthodoxy and reformation, evidently perverting one of the plainest passages in the book of God, is not only matter of wonder, but likewise of lamentations, of mourning, and wo. "Hard lot, says one, of the scriptures of truth! And presumptuous boldness in man! to prostitute the sacred oracles of the eternal God, to support every whim they take it into their heads, to propogate."

III. We have a warrant for subjection to the present civil government, in all things lawful, in Paul's first epistle to Timothy, chap. ii. 1, 2. Here he exhorts to *pray for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.* By kings, and all that are in authority here, can be meant no other civil rulers but the *heathen Roman Emperors* and their *deputies*; for none but these were in Paul's day, as we have already seen. *Praying for magistrates* is an act of *subjection* to them; and if it was the duty of christians in the apostolic age, to pray for *pagan princes*, it is evident, beyond all reasonable contradiction, that it is our duty to pray for one of the *best protestant princes in the world.* But we find the obvious meaning of this passage turned out of doors, by a member of the Reformed Presbytery, and a very odd sense put in its room. Mr. Thorburn, in his *Vindiciæ Magistratus*, P. 205. tells us, that when Paul exhorts to *pray for kings, and for all that are in authority*, he enjoined and recommended to pray for, and wish well to *God's ordinance, or lawful authority.* This comment is exactly of a piece with Mr. M'Millan's gloss on *the powers that be*, by which, says he, the apostle certainly means *magistracy in the abstract.* He had a shadow of reason for this gloss, absurd as it is; for Paul uses the *abstract* for the *concrete*, or the word *powers* for *persons in power.* But Mr. Thorburn has not the smallest shadow of reason for his comment; for the apostle exhorts, that prayers be

made for *persons*, viz. for *kings*, and for *all that are in authority*, and not for God's ordinance, or lawful authority, as he says.

It is plain, that Mr Thorburn uses these words, *God's ordinance*, and *lawful authority*, in an abstract view; or, as having no respect to civil rulers in Paul's day. And so, the meaning of the apostle, according to him, is, That the Christians in Paul's day should pray for God's ordinance of magistracy in the *abstract*, and for lawful authority in the *abstract*. Is there not reason to say here, *The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad*? Strange! Has the ordinance of magistracy in the abstract, any need of supplication and prayers? Can magistracy in the abstract be a mean of living a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty?—Paul exhorts to pray for all that are in authority; but how absurd would it be to say, the ordinance of magistracy in the abstract, is in *authority*, or that *lawful authority* is in *authority*?—Is not a commentary of this sort adapted to confirm Deists in their belief, that the Old and New Testament is a volume of nonsense; or a cunningly devised fable?

The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; and the passage before us must not be excluded from being a part of our direction. Now, if Mr Thorburn and his brethren believe his gloss, on this passage, to be the mind of the Holy Ghost in it, they ought to pray in publick, in the words of the apostle, for kings and all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. And if their people be offended at them, for using the words of the Holy Ghost in prayer, they may inform them, once for all, That by *kings* and *all that are in authority*, they do not mean king GEORGE the Third, nor governors that are sent by him, but they are praying for, and wishing well to the ordinance of magistracy. If Mr. Thorburn's comment is just, that by kings the apostle means magistracy in the abstract, then by *all men* in the preceding clause, he must not mean men, but *manhood*, or *human nature* in the abstract. And the primitive Christians were not directed to pray and give thanks for their fellow-men, but for hu-

man nature in the abstract. An odd sort of thanksgiving ! Whether can he mean thanksgiving for human nature in primeval innocence, under reigning depravity, regenerated or glorified ? Besides, how could such a prayer, as Mr. Thorburn mentions, have promoted their *peace* ? They were certainly to pray in such a manner as that these who heard them might understand them ; that they did not pray for the then present rulers, otherwise they were but deceitful jugglers. And can Mr. Thorburn, or any man living, tell how a prayer for magistracy in the abstract could promote their peace, when they could not pray for the then rulers ? Both Mr M'Millan, and Mr Thorburn make the apostle to deliver a truly ensnaring precept to the primitive Christians. When the apostle enjoins them to be subject to *the higher powers* ;—and to *render to every one their due*, could ever these Christians imagine, that by *every one* the apostle meant *magistracy in the abstract* ? As little could they imagine, that he meant rulers who should live three hundred years after.—And when the apostle exhorts them to pray for *all men*, for *kings* and *all in authority*, could they ever imagine, that by *all men*, he meant all their *fellow men* ; but by *kings*, and these in *authority*, *authority itself*, while he gives them not the remotest hint of it ? To give them such plain and explicit directions, and never once in all his epistles gives them the least hint, that they were not to pay tribute unto, nor to pray for the civil rulers ; if this is not to make the apostle, or rather the Spirit of God, lay a trap for, and give a most ensnaring precept to these Christians, I know not what can be so. I know not how men can venture to publish such nonsense. They certainly know, that the unprejudiced will see their absurdities ; and that their bigotted followers will swallow any thing. If any man can swallow the sense, which the reformed Presbytery hath given of the 13th of the Romans, and other similar texts, he will never strain at a gnat, for he is able to swallow a camel.

SECTION II.

SUBJECTION to the present British Government, in things lawful, warranted by SCRIPTURE EXAMPLES.

THAT the church of Christ, in all ages and places of the world, wherever God appointed the bounds of her habitation, was subject to the *higher powers*, and not only to the *good and gentle*; but also to the *froward*, is a truth so plainly revealed in the Volume of God's Book, that he who runs may read it.—The kings of Egypt were gross idolaters, worshippers of bulls, rivers, onions, &c.; and yet the church of God was subject to them for several generations. *Know of a surety*, said the Lord unto Abram, *that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years*, Gen. xv. 13.—Pious Joseph was a subject; yea, a prime minister to Pharaoh, and yet was blameless; for the Sovereign, who rules on high, made him *lord of Pharaoh's house, and ruler over all his substance; To bind his princes at his pleasure; and to teach his senators wisdom*, Psal. cv. 21, 22.—Jacob, the beloved of the Lord, went down to Egypt with all his seed, well knowing that he and they were to be the subjects of heathen rulers: and yet he was blameless; for the Lord said unto him, *Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation*. This noble Patriarch, this prince, who had power with God, and prevailed, was so far from despising dominion, and speaking evil of dignities, that he blessed a pagan prince.

After the reign of the judges, Israel had kings of their own nation and religion, and they were subject to the lawful authority of the very worst of them. More of the kings of Judah wanted a competent measure of scripture qualifications than had them; and not one of the kings of Israel had any measure of these qualifications at all.—Jeroboam the son of Nebat, their first king, was a sinner before the Lord exceedingly; and all his successors walked

in his steps; every one of them did *evil in the sight of the Lord*. But were ever either Israel or Judah reproved for obeying such princes in things lawful? No, indeed: God frequently sent his prophets to reprove them for their own idolatry, and other abominations, but never with a commission to cast off the lawful authority of an apostatizing Solomon, an idolatrous Jeroboam, and a devilish Manasseh.—The prophets, as well as the people of Israel and Judah, were subject to the worst of their kings. Elijah girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab, to the entrance of Jezreel, 1 Kings xviii. 4, 6. The hand of the Lord was on Elijah, when he performed this act of subjection to one of the worst of princes. And we dare not presume to say, that the same hand was not on the prophet Jeremiah, when he said to a perfidious Zedekiah, *O my lord the king, Let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee, that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there.*

Almost six hundred years revolved from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ; and during that long period, the Jews had no king of their own nation and religion, but were subject to heathen princes, such as Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar kings of Babylon; and Cyrus and Darius, kings of the Medes and Persians.—It is well known what reputation Daniel and his fellows were in at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and the first Persian kings, and that other Jews under the succeeding ones held the highest posts in the government.—Ezra, who was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, was sent by Artaxerxes king of Persia with a royal commission to rectify the church and state of the Jews.—Nehemiah, who was the royal cup-bearer in the Persian court, was empowered by the same prince to go and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.—Mordecai the Jew was prime minister to Ahasuerus, another Persian king, Esther x. 2, 3.—And the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus. It is true, indeed, that the Jews, after

their return from the captivity, were governed by their own laws, and practised their own religion, under the administration of the high priest, assisted by the Sanhedrim; yet they still remained subject to the dominion of the Persians, as long as that empire lasted. And tho' it be true also, that the Jews cast off the authority of Antiochus Epiphanus, king of Syria, and maintained their independence, by force of arms, above a hundred years, under the conduct of Judas Macabæus, and others, yet this revolt was no act of disobedience to the lawful commands of that prince, but a just defence of their holy religion, and precious lives. This Antiochus was a cruel persecutor of the Jews. In three days time he slew forty thousand Jews, and sold as many for slaves to the neighbouring nations. He commanded the Jews to renounce the worship of the true God, and to conform to all the rites of the Grecian idolatry, upon pain of death.

When the great Teacher, sent from God, came into the world, he found the church of the Jews subject to the Roman heathen emperors; and was so far from disapproving their subjection, that he commanded them to pay tribute to Cæsar.

More than 300 years elapsed between the death of Christ, and the reign of Constantine the Great, the first Christian Emperor; and during that period, the New Testament church was subject to the heathen Roman emperors, and their subjection was warranted by the law of Christ; *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, Rom. xiii. 1. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme. 1 Pet ii. 13.* History gives no account, that for the space of 300 years, they were chargeable with a single act of disobedience to these precepts, either refusing obedience in things lawful, or disseminating seditious principles among their connexions.

Surely these examples of the old and new-testament church, are recorded to direct us, how to behave towards, the powers that be, when God, in his adorable providence, gives strangers to rule over us: for, what was

written aforetime, was written for our learning, on whom the ends of the world are come.

The approved examples of the saints in scripture, and such are all those above mentioned, are as much the rule of our duty, as the precepts of the moral law. *Be followers of them,* saith the apostle, *who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* If it was lawful for the church, in all past generations, to obey the just authority of the most froward kings and emperors, when God appointed the bounds of her habitation in their dominions, surely it must be lawful for us, to obey the just authority of a king, who is meek and gentle, a lover of his subjects, and the guardian of their laws and liberties.

The following conclusions are evident from the preceding sections.

1. That the reformed Presbytery are not *found in the faith.* Their senseless exposition of Rom. xiii. 1. and other plain precepts of a similar nature, is a manifest token, that they have departed from the faith delivered unto the saints, in these precepts, and are following *cunningly devised fables.* The most, if not the whole, of the precepts of the divine law, are so plain, that their meaning is obvious to Christians of the weakest abilities, to little children and babes, as well as to young men and fathers. Had the reformed Presbytery mistaken the meaning of some dark sayings in the writings of the prophets and apostles, or the import of some prediction, wraped up in metaphorical language, charity, which *thinketh no evil,* would draw a veil over such a mistake; but when they pervert the plain sense of the words of the Holy Ghost, they are justly to be blamed as unsound in the faith.

2. That the reformed Presbytery are not going forth by the *approved footsteps of the flock of Christ,* in all past generations. The old and new-testament church, as we have seen, were subject, for ages and generations, to far worse princes than any of the Hanoverian line, and yet were blameless. The said Presbytery are not walking in the footsteps of the inspired prophets, and holy apostles of the Lamb. Daniel, a man greatly beloved,

and a notable prophet, said to a far worse prince than the British monarch, *O king live for ever.* Paul, who was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles said to a far worse prince than his present majesty King George, *I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee.* And to another heathen ruler he said, *I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.*—Were these chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof, now living, and hearing a reformed Presbyter expressing his sentiments about civil government, would they not say unto him? *Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.*—Here let me ask a reformed Presbyter, *Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?* Nay, the reformed Presbytery are not walking in the steps of the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. Christ is called a *servant of rulers*, Isa. xlix. 7. which designation certainly imports his subjection to the Roman heathen rulers, in the days of his humiliation; for then there were no other civil rulers in the land of Judea. That adorable person, by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice, manifested himself to be a servant of rulers, by paying tribute to Cæsar a heathen prince. When the tax-gatherers at Capernaum asked Peter, *Doth not your master pay tribute?* “Peter, (says Bishop Hall,) as one well acquainted with the mind and practice of his master, answered, *Yes.*” There was no truer pay-master of the king’s dues than he that was King of kings. Well did Peter know, that he did not only give, but preach tribute. When the Herodians laid twigs for him, as supposing that so great a prophet would be all for the liberty and exemption of God’s chosen people, he choaks them with their own coin, and told them the stamp argued the right; *Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s.* The tribute which Christ paid was not, as some think, for the service of the temple, but a civil tribute, paid to the Roman civil rulers; and therefore Christ calls them *kings.* *Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom, or tribute?* Are the reformed Presbytery then walking in the steps of the great Teacher come from

God? no indeed: their refusing obedience to the present civil government, in things lawful, is a direct contradiction to the supreme authority and unblemished practice of the Son of God. So the disciple becomes wiser than his divine Master, and the servant than his highest Lord!

3. That the reformed Presbytery do not reduce their own principles to practice. In words, they refuse all subjection to the present government; in deeds, they are truly loyal; for, in their several stations they support government as much, by paying tribute, as the most loyal subjects in the nation. The reformed Presbytery are so sensible of this, that in their Testimony, page 199, they do not testify against paying tribute for the support of government, but against a *direct* and *active*, a *free* and *voluntary* paying of it. The loyal subjects of the nation are here supposed to be sinners, because they pay tribute in a direct and active, in a free and voluntary way; and the reformed Presbytery, and their followers, are supposed innocent, because they pay tribute, in an indirect and inactive, in an unfree and involuntary way. This distinction between a voluntary and involuntary way of paying tribute, is a most ensnaring one; or to use the words of the reformed Presbytery, it is a *mere shift* and *artifice*, and serves for no other purpose, but to cheat their own, and others' consciences. If this distinction hath a foundation in the volume of God's book, no man can be under any necessity to suffer persecution for conscience sake; for, by an indirect payment of tribute to the worst of princes, and for the worst of purposes, and by an involuntary obedience to their most impious commands, we may preserve a good conscience, and escape the rage of the enemy and avenger.

If this distinction be just, Protestants in Popish countries may have a lawful and an easy way to escape banishment, imprisonment, or a cruel death: an involuntary subjection to the idolatrous worship of the Romish Harlot, and involuntary prayers to angels and the blessed Virgin, will preserve them in the peaceable possession of their lives, and liberties. According to this modern rule of

Christian conversation. Daniel might have escaped the den of lions, by an involuntary restraining of prayer before God for thirty days. The three children might have escaped the fiery furnace, by an involuntary prostration before Nebuchadnezzar's golden image. Our noble army of martyrs, in the late persecuting period in Scotland, might have saved their lives, and preserved a good conscience too, by an involuntary prayer for the king, as head of all causes, civil and ecclesiastical. Disloyalty to the present civil government, is, with the reformed Presbytery, a great branch of reformation; but their involuntary way of paying tribute is a dead fly in this box of precious ointment, for it allows them to be loyal beyond all bounds of reason and religion. Were the present government to demand a taxation for the hellish purpose of rooting out the Christian religion in Great Britain, the Reformed Presbytery could easily shelter themselves from sin, under the wings of an indirect and involuntary payment of it, which is nothing else but an indirect, and involuntary way of sinning. To pay tribute to the present government must be either a sin, or a duty: if a sin, it ought not to be done, neither in a voluntary, nor involuntary way: if a duty, it ought to be performed with the whole heart, for the law of God requires no such thing as an indirect, and involuntary performance of any duty. But absurd, and ensnaring as this involuntary way of paying tribute is, Mr. Thorburn, in his *Vindicia Magistratus*, page 213, pretends to support it from, Rom. vii. 19, and 20. *For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* If these words are indeed a just foundation, for an involuntary way of paying tribute, a true Christian may steal, commit adultery, swear falsely, and then tell the world, that he is blameless; that it is no more he that doth it, but sin that dwelleth in him. And that the evil which he would not, that he did. Alas! that a teacher in Israel should so grossly pervert the words of the holy One. But if the present civil rulers are so bad, in the judgment of the Reformed Presbytery, that is a sin to pray for them, sure

ly it must be a sin also to support them by paying tribute, either directly or indirectly, in a voluntary or involuntary way. Therefore, when they insinuate, that they pay tribute in an indirect, and involuntary way, they just tell the world, that they are indirect and involuntary transgressors. Certain it is, that this indirect, and involuntary way of sinning, will meet with as little of divine approbation, as a direct, and a voluntary way of sinning. If the Reformed Presbytery, and their followers, acted according to their principles, they would pay no tribute at all, neither directly nor indirectly; but would let a great person whom they call the *robber of Christ*, take it from them by force.

Our worthy ancestors, in the late persecuting period in Scotland, were not so well acquainted with the science of metaphysics as their successors. They knew nothing of paying tribute in an indirect, and involuntary way to a prince, who was indeed a robber of Christ. They did not spoil themselves of their goods with their own hands, nor with hands borrowed from their good neighbours, but they were spoiled of their goods by the hands of the robber himself, when taxes were demanded to support an army for suppressing the gospel. *They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and a more enduring substance.*--The Presbyterian Covenanter justly calls the distinction between a voluntary and involuntary payment of tribute a *jesuitical distinction*; and here I call it a *diabolical*, yea, a *blasphemous distinction*; and an attempt to support it by scripture is no less so.

In the text used to support it, the apostle certainly means, that it was remaining depravity which did that which he would not, and therefore Mr. Thorburn must mean, that it is indwelling sin which makes the involuntary payment of tribute. But the fatal difference is, the apostle disapproves of it in the strongest manner: but Mr. Thorburn approves, or at least excuses. Unless he means, that the apostle approves, or excuses, it is nothing to his purpose; and how impious the insinuation!

4. That the reformed Presbytery are not going forth by the *footsteps of the flock of Christ* in Scotland in *reforming*

thus. They would have the world believe, that they are the genuine successors of our famous reformers; but no man, who knows the history of the reformation, can believe them to be so. From the dawn of the Reformation from Popery to the Revolution; our worthy ancestors were subject to the powers which then were, in all things lawful. They were subject to Queen Mary, a bigotted Papist, and a bloody persecutor, till the body politic deposed her from the government. They were subject to King James the Sixth, who proved a covenant-breaker, and by secret fraud and open violence, endeavoured to impose Episcopacy upon them. They were subject to King Charles the First, who succeeded his father in the kingdom, and in all his evils, and particularly in overturning, and new-modelling, the discipline and government of the church of Scotland. They owned his civil authority in the strongest terms, even when he was endeavouring to obtrude the Service-book upon them by force of arms. They were subject to King Charles the Second, whose little finger was thicker than his father's loins, and continued their subjection, till he became a merciless tyrant, and required it as a test of their loyalty, to own his supremacy in the church, as well as in the state: and when a demand of this kind was made, it was their duty to obey God rather than man. Were the reformed Presbytery, and their followers, the true successors of the ancient Presbyterians in Scotland, they would be subject to King George the third in all things lawful, and continue their subjection, till the gentle sceptre, which he now sways over his subjects, were exchanged for a rod of iron; or till he demanded of them, as a test of their loyalty, an acknowledgment of his supremacy in the church, as well as in the state.*

5. That the reformed Presbytery are not *rendering to God*, according to the *benefit* done unto them. Is it not an inestimable blessing, that the present government doth

* Charles had been heading and hanging a considerable time before they rejected his authority; and there is no reason to think that they would have rejected it, if he had not enforced the supremacy with death, but allowed them to live, as English dissenters do at present.

not disturb us in the exercise of our holy religion, nor cause us to seek the food of our souls at the peril of our lives? And is not this blessing from a gracious God, who hath the heart of the king in his hand, as the rivers of water; let it turneth whether soever he will? Is it not matter of thankfulness to the father of mercies, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty under our civil rulers? Why then are not supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks made for all men by the reformed Presbytery? *For kings, and for all that are in authority?* Ezra was as sensible, and as zealous a reformer, as any Presbyterian in Scotland can pretend to be, and we find him expressing the warmest gratitude to God for the privileges, which the church of Israel enjoyed under the heathen kings of Persia. *Ezra vii. 27. Blessed be the God of our fathers, who hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.* Chap. ix. 9. *Our God hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.* The practice of this inspired reformer is worthy of imitation, even by a reformed Presbytery. The example of this champion for the house of his God is recorded for our learning, upon whom the ends of the world are come. The peaceable possession of our civil, and religious privileges under the present government is of God. *Praise thy God, O Zion, for he maketh peace in thy borders.* Therefore if any man despise this blessing, he is reprov'd, or rather upbraided by an inspired apostle. *Rom. ii. 4. Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

SECTION III.

Containing ANSWERS to some OBJECTIONS.

Obj. I. "THE law of God requires Christians to
"choose a king of their own religion.

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“ Deut. xvii. 15. *One from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee*; But the king of Great Britain is not a brother, or one of our religion; and therefore subjection to him is sinful.”

Ans. The question here is not, whether we should choose a king of our own religion or not; but whether it is our duty to obey the present king in things lawful, or not. It is the duty of Christians to choose a king of their own religion; and to do otherwise is very sinful: but it is no sin to obey a king of a different religion, in things lawful when it is not in their power to choose a king of their own religion, as was the case with the primitive Christians, during the first three centuries; and the same is the case with all Christians in Popish and Pagan countries at this day. The rule to direct Christians how to choose a king, and the rule to direct them how to behave towards one chosen by others, are very different. When they have the choice of a king, the command of God is, *One from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee*. But when God appoints the bounds of their habitation in countries, where they cannot have a king of their own religion, like Israel in the land of the Chaldeans, or the first Christians in the heathen Roman empire, then the divine command is, *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; the powers that be, are ordained of God*, Rom. xiii. 1. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme*, 1 Peter ii. 13.—But besides all this, it is not true, that the present British King is not a brother, or not of our religion. He is a Protestant by profession; and his being so is an essential condition of government. He is a Christian by profession; and charity, which thinketh no evil, without sufficient evidence, will account him a Christian indeed. It is true, he is a professed member of the Episcopal church of England, which is a grievance to other Presbyterians in Scotland, as well as to these called reformed; but his being a member of said church doth not make him a king of a different religion from Presbyterians, nor destroy his brotherhood to them as a Protestant, and professed Christian.

Object. 2. "We find the people of God in scripture refusing subjection to usurpers, idolaters, and murderers. The loyal subjects of King David would not submit to the usurped authority of Absalom. King Aſa degraded his mother Maacha from her royal ſtation, be-
 " cauſe of her idolatry. Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, and
 " Athaliah, the wife of King Jehoram, were ſlain, be-
 " cauſe they were idolaters and murderers."

Anſ. If a thouſand ſcripture examples like theſe could be adduced, they could militate nothing at all againſt ſubjection to the preſent civil government, in matters lawful. There would be ſtrength in the objection, if King George the Third were an uſurper, an idolater, and a murderer. But if any man ſhould affirm, that the preſent Britiſh Monarch is an Abſalom for uſurpation, and a ſon of Jezebel for idolatry and murder, I would ſay of that man, he is more fit for bedlam, than to be reaſoned with.

Object. 3. "The true Presbyterian covenanters in Scotland never did, neither at, nor ſince the Revolution, acknowledge the preſent civil government as lawful."

Anſ. If we may believe hiſtory, it is not fact, that the true Presbyterian Covenanters in Scotland did not acknowledge the civil government as lawful, at the Revolution. The author of the memoirs of the Church of Scotland ſays, page 301. "To the eternal honour of the
 " wild, antimonarchical, enthuſiaſtic, lunatic, Camero-
 " nians, (as they were then called), theſe Presbyterians
 " were the firſt men in Scotland that addreſſed, or peti-
 " tioned the Convention of Eſtates, to place the crown of
 " Scotland on the head of their deliverer King WILLIAM.
 " But if the objection were never ſo true, it contains no
 " argument at all againſt the lawfulness of the preſent ci-
 " vil government, for, if no government muſt be acknow-
 " ledged as lawful, till every male-content be pleaſed with
 " it, no ſuch thing will be found in the world as a lawful
 " government. Muſt obedience to government in things
 " lawful be ſuſpended, till every blind, and ſelf-willed
 " zealot acknowledge it as lawful? or, muſt a handful of
 " diſſenters have a negative over a whole nation, in the
 " erection of civil government?"

Obj. 4. "To obey the present civil government in things lawful, is an approbation of all the evils in the constitution."

Ans. The following things impartially considered, will expose the weakness and absurdity of this objection. (1.) That there are many evils in the constitution is confessed; but that obedience in things lawful is an approbation of these evils, is denied, till it be proven by the law and testimony of Jesus Christ. Pray, what necessary connexion is there between obedience in things lawful, and an approbation of all, or any of the evils in the constitution? Any man may see, without the assistance of metaphysics, that these things are as different as light and darkness. Would an inspired prophet have exhorted Israel, to serve the heathen king of Babylon, if their service had been an approbation of the evils of his constitution? Would an inspired apostle have exhorted the primitive Christians, to be subject to the heathen Roman emperors, if their subjection had been an approbation of the evils in their constitution? Did the law of God allow the saints of old, to make a distinction between obedience in things lawful, and an approbation of the faults of a constitution, and doth it now forbid them to make any such distinction? (2.) This objection plainly supposes, that no subjection is due to civil or ecclesiastic rulers, till their constitution be without faults; and thus all human authority is cashiered as sinful, while the world stands; for, where shall we find a blameless constitution, but in that high and holy place, where Jehovah hath his throne? Here we have an anti-government principle with a witness! And what is still worse, this objection militates against the authority of the supreme law-giver, enjoining obedience to civil and ecclesiastic rulers; for, according to it, we must not obey that divine precept, *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers*, because there are faults in their constitution. And according to it, we must not obey that divine precept, *Obey them that have the rule over you*, because there are faults in their constitution. If the principle, contained in this objection, were universally reduced to practice, the whole world of

mankind would be a lawless mob, a great congregation of rebels against God and men.

2. There are good as well as evil things in the constitution. In the Coronation-oath, the king of England solemnly promises at his coronation, and swears, "That he will govern the people of this kingdom of England, and the dominions therunto belonging, according to the statutes in parliament agreed on, and the laws and customs of the same: That he will, to the utmost of his power, maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the gospel, and the Protestant religion established by law." By an act of Union, the king of England, at his succession to the throne, likewise takes, and subscribes an oath, to preserve the Protestant religion, and Presbyterian church-government in Scotland. Some have observed, that in this oath are expressed all the duties that a monarch can owe to his people; namely, to govern according to law; to execute judgment in mercy; and to maintain the established religion.—An obligation on the king by oath, to preserve Episcopal church-government in England is, no doubt, an evil in the constitution; but that this evil renders it criminal in Presbyterians to obey him in things lawful, never was, and never will be proven by the dictates of the Holy Ghost. But while Presbyterians testify against this, and other evils, in the constitution, let them be thankful to God for the good things in it. *For every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

To have a king obliged by oath, to maintain, to the utmost of his power, the laws of God, the true profession of the gospel, and the Protestant religion, would be esteemed an invaluable blessing from heaven by the remnant of the woman's seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ in Popish countries, where the dragon is wroth with them, and makes war with them, by the merciless inquisition, by goals and fetters, by the strangling cord and burning pile, by the breaking wheel, and other hellish engines.

of cruelty. Had God dealt with us as we deserve, we had been this day, like many other Protestants, groaning under the iron yoke of Antichrist, and pushed by the Romish monster, which hath two horns like a lamb, and speaks as a dragon. But if any should so far despise their own mercies, as to imagine, That the evil things in the British constitution spoil all the good things in it, and render them of no value, the rod of reproof, and not reasoning is their due. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?* Deuter, xxxii. 6.

Obj. 5. "To pray that God may bless our sovereign King GEORGE, and the apparent heir of the crown; that he may blast all the plots, or efforts of whatever enemies, open or secret, against the Protestant succession to the throne of these kingdoms, in the family of Hanover; that he may be gracious to the high courts of Parliament, in this and the neighbouring island, and lead them to proper measures for the honour of Christ, must be understood as containing earnest supplications to the Lord, that he may continue and preserve an *Erastian* constitution.

Ans. This objection is much of a piece with the preceding, and what is said in answer to it might serve as an answer to this. But as arguments are never wanting to refute error, in whatever shape it appears, let the following things be considered as an answer to this objection.

1. The supplications in this prayer are not understood by the supplicants in the sense of the objectors, nor doth the Hearer of prayer understand them in such a sense.
2. The sense alledged is neither expressed, nor in the least insinuated in the words of this prayer, and to impose a sense on them, which is neither expressed nor implied, is a bearing false witness against our neighbour.
3. Praying for God's blessing to civil rulers, and for long life and prosperity to them, doth by no means imply a praying, at the same time, for a continuance of the evils in their constitution. The scripture tells us, that to bid a *false teacher God speed*, is to be *partaker of his evil deeds*;

but it no where tells us, that to pray for the grace of God, and for long life and prosperity, even to bad men, is to be partaker of their evil deeds. If a praying for God's blessing to civil rulers is inseparably connected, with a praying for the continuance of the evils in their constitution, we must not pray for them while the world standeth, nor yet for ecclesiastic rulers; for there have always been evils in the constitution of both, and will be to the end of time. Nay, according to this objection, we must not pray for grace to sinners, because this is a praying for the continuance of the reign of sin in them. We must not pray for more grace to saints, because this is a prayer for the continuance of the remains of sin in them. And for the same reason we must not pray for ourselves, whether we be saints, or sinners. 4. To pray for a blessing to civil rulers, and for long life and prosperity, not only to the *meek and gentle*, but also to the *froward*, is warranted by scripture precept, and example. *Seek the peace of the city*, said Jeremiah to the captives in Babylon, *and pray unto the Lord for it*, Jer. xxix. 7. Paul exhorts, *That prayers be made for kings, and for all that are in authority*, 1 Tim. ii. 1. 2. Our Lord exhorts to *bless them that curse us*, and to *pray for them which persecute us*, Matth. v. 44. Nehemiah said unto king Artaxerxes, *Let the king live for ever*, Neh. ii. 3. and Daniel to King Darius, *O king live for ever*, Dan. vi. 21. Did the captives in Babylon pray for the continuance of idolatry in that city, when they prayed for peace to it? did the primitive Christians pray for the continuance of idolatry in the Roman empire, when they prayed for the heathen emperors? Did Nehemiah and Daniel pray that king Artaxerxes and Darius might continue idolaters, when they prayed for long life to them? and when the disciples of Christ pray for their persecutors, do they pray that their persecuting spirit may continue with them?—Every person, not overwhelmed in the gulf of strong prejudice, will answer all these questions in the negative. And if these prayers for heathen rulers were without blame in the sight of God, how comes it to pass that Presbyterians, in our day, must be esteemed so criminal in praying

for the blessing of God, and for long life and prosperity, to Christian rulers? Is there an inseparable connexion between men and their sins, and between the good and evil things in a civil constitution in these last days, which was not in the Mosaic and apostolic ages? *

Obj. 6. "The ministers and people, who disown the present civil government, are very religious people, and this is no weak argument, that they are in the right."

Ans. The example of good men is to be followed no farther, than it is an imitation of the example of Christ; *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 1.* Peter was a good man, and an inspired apostle, and yet Paul *withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.* Doctrines taught by good men are to be rejected as reprobate silver, when they are not supported by a *Thus saith the Lord.* *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them, Isa. viii. 20.* *In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* It was a good reply of Augustine, to a clamorous disputant, crying, "Hear me, hear me:" *Nec ego te, nec tu me, sed ambo audiemus Christum, i. e.* "I will neither hear thee, nor do thou hear me; but let us both hear Christ." Error gilded over with an appearance of truth, or dressed up in the gold ring and gay clothing of piety, is far more dangerous, than when it appears in its own tattered rags; it is a snare in Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor, to catch the weak and unwary, though well-meaning Christian.—There are good and bad among the reformed, as well as among other denominations.

Obj. 7. "Our national and solemn engagements, and especially the national covenant, oblige us in these lands to disown the authority of every king, who is not a presbyterian, and a covenanter."

Ans. As an answer to this objection, let the following things be attentively considered.

* Praying that our rulers may be directed to proper measures for promoting the glory of Christ, is not praying for their continuance in their evils. Praying for a spirit of reformation to them, is not praying for erastianism, nor for any other evils to be continued.

1. There is no such obligation expressed, nor in the least insinuated, in any one article or sentence of the covenants. If these covenants had bound the covenanters, and their posterity, to disown every king of Britain, who is not a Presbyterian, and a covenanter, they would have been bonds of iniquity, as we shall see immediately.

2. The covenanters themselves never understood their covenants, as laying them under any such engagement, as is abundantly evident, both from their *doctrine* and *practice*.—In the twenty-third chapter of their Confession, sect. 4. they teach, “That infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate’s just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience?” from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted. It is a most wild, and groundless imagination, that the compilers of the Confession understood this article, as principally relating to the condition of a people, emerging out of the darkness and superstition of Paganism or Popery. Did the wise, learned, and venerable assembly of divines, convened at Westminster, compose a Confession, or any part of it, not for themselves, but for a people beginning to renounce Pagan, or Popish idolatry? To think they did so, is a senseless and whimsical dream, or the fruit of a raving imagination; for, it represents our reformers as awfully and absurdly juggling with God and man, by confessing the faith of others, and not their own; yea, without telling that they did so, or telling what they maintained as the rule of their own practice in this matter; and all this under the solemnity of that covenant-oath, in pursuance whereof the said Confession was composed and maintained.* It would be much more honour done to the compilers of the confession to say, that they erred in this article, than to impose such an absurd sense upon it: or, as Mr. McMillan junr. says in his letter, page 29. “The minds of our reformers, at this early period, do not seem to have been fully emancipated from the bondage of the national

* Answers by the Associate Presbytery to Mr. Nairn’s objections, dissent, page 92.

“prejudice in favours of the doctrine of hereditary right to the crown.”

But why should such an extravagant and absurd sense be imposed on this article of the Confession, a sense so full of disgrace to the compilers of it, since the meaning is quite obvious from the words, and from the scriptures cited to prove it? The sense of this article may be given in the following words, That it is the duty of Christians to obey magistrates who are infidels, or of a different religion, in all things lawful, when there are no other in place; where God hath determined the bounds of their habitation, whether it be in Britain and Ireland, or in any other place of the world, and when it is not in their power to have any other. This was the case with Israel in the Babelonish captivity, and in the reign of Ahasuerus, when they were scattered thro’ an hundred and seven and twenty provinces. It was the case with them when they were subdued by the Romans. And the same was the case with the primitive Christians for more then three hundred years. It was not in their power to have magistrates of their own religion, there were none but heathen magistrates then in the world, and they behoved either to obey these in things lawful, or to go out of the world.—And that the covenanters never viewed their covenants as binding them to disown every king in these lands, who is not a Presbyterian, and a covenanter, is evident from their *practice*. It is an undoubted fact, that they acknowledged princes in communion with the Episcopal church of England, a long time after they were emerged from the darkness of Pagan and Popish idolatry.

3. The covenants did not, and could not, bind the covenanters to any thing, but what they were bound to by the law of God, prior to their covenanting. Their covenants bound them to observe all the commandments of God, at all times, in all places, and in all circumstances of life. Now, since their covenants obliged them to obey all the commandments, then the two following, and others of a similar nature, cannot be excepted: *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for their is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God, Rom*

xiii. 1. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme,* 1 Pet. ii. 13.—Did it ever enter into the heads of the covenanters that these, and the like precepts, were to have no respect to them, nor to their posterity, if any other king should fill the British throne, but a Presbyterian, and a covenanter? To say that the above precepts are not binding in these lands, because they are covenanted, is to say that the covenants of our ancestors hath made void a part of the eternal rule of righteousness, at least in Britain and Ireland, when any king, but a Presbyterian and a covenanter rules over them. This is a shameful, a sinful, and a blasphemous reproach cast on the immutable law of Jehovah, as if it changed with the revolutions of time. If our worthy ancestors were on the stage of time, and heard such a construction put on their covenants, they would say, *False witnesses did rise up; they laid to our charge things that we know not,* Psalm xxxv. 11. The precepts, enjoining obedience to civil rulers, are not like the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, which were abolished by the death of Christ, because they were only *shadows of good things*, but they are binding at all times, and in all places, to the end of the world: they are some of these words of the Lord, which *endure for ever*. They were binding on God's covenanted Israel in the heathen land of Chaldaea. They were binding in Paul's day on the Christians at Rome, the metropolis of a kingdom of graven images. They were binding on Jewish converts, not only at Rome, but on these also who dwell in Judea, that once holy, and covenanted land. And why they should not be binding in these isles of the sea, when the supreme civil ruler is not a Presbyterian, is a mystery not to be resolved by men or angels. *Do we make void the law* through covenanting? *God forbid*: yea, we swear, that, through Christ, who strengthneth us, we will walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.—I am no enemy to covenanting, nor have any design to throw dust on our national vows; but am bold to aver, that the solemn covenants of our noble ancestors, which were for more than four hundred and thirty years after the law,

could not disanul it, that they should make the authority of it of none effect in any one jot or tittle. And they who think otherwise, may try how they will reconcile their sentiments with the apostle's definition of the word of God, which is, that it *liveth*, and *abideth for ever*.

I conclude the answer to this objection by observing, that since our covenants oblige us to obey a king in all things lawful, who is an infidel, or of a different religion, when there is no other in the country where we live, and when it is not in our power to have another, then they are covenant-breakers, who disown the lawful authority of the present British king, even tho' he were an infidel, or of a different religion. And considering that our king is a Christian; and, as far as I know, one of the best kings in the world, how aggravated must their breach of covenant be in the sight of God?

Object. 8. "The countenance given to the Popish religion by the king, and Parliament of Great Britain, is a sufficient reason to disown their authority."

Ans. If every act of male-administration, loosed subjects from obedience to the lawful commands of their princes, there could be no such thing as loyalty in this world, but every man would be a lord, and a law to himself. Are there not innumerable acts of male-administration in every state, province, and kingdom under heaven? Perhaps it is not easy to determine what degree of male-administration will warrant subjects to cast off the just authority of their civil rulers. Though the toleration of Popery in England is a very great evil, and hath a woful tendency to promote the interest of the man of sin; yet Protestants are still in the possession of their natural, civil, and religious privileges; they may worship God according to his own appointment, without disturbance, or the least dread of danger from the powers that be. What would Protestants give for these inestimable privileges in some Popish countries, where their lives and liberties hang at the girdle of the Roman dragon, whose tender mercies are cruelty, and where the inquisition is on one hand, and the damnation of hell on the other? And bad as the toleration of Popery is, it is no worse

than the countenance given by Solomon to the worship of Ashtoreth the goddess of Zidonians, to Milcom the abomination of the Amonites, and to Chemosh the abomination of Moab. — This act of male-administration did not free the subjects of Solomon from their due obedience to him. If their obedience in things lawful had been criminal, certainly God would have warned them of it, by his servants the prophets. Because Solomon went after other gods, the Lord threatened to rend the kingdom from him, and to give it to his servant: but no threatening is denounced against his subjects for their obedience to his just and legal authority.

Obj. 9. How can Seceders reconcile their principles against civil government, with their principle and practice, in separating from an established church or ministry, whose constitution they acknowledge to be good, and who, being presbyterially ordained, are still countenanced by the body of the people? If their doctrine about civil government be right, then all the defections, and male-administrations in the church, could never have been a ground of their separation from her; but on the contrary, they should still have continued in communion with her, and subjection to her in matters lawful, in a way of testifying against the same, and effecting their reformation, by all means that were habile for them.

Ans. If common sense, and sound reasoning, cannot extricate Seceders from this dilemma, they will cut their way thro' it by a very gentle touch of the sword of the spirit. And to loose this apparently well-tied knot, let the following things be considered.

1. The church of Scotland cast Seceders out of her communion; and therefore they could not continue in it, in a way of testifying against her defections.

2. The objectors confound a civil and religious connexion, which are things as distinct as light and darkness. To be a member of the church, and a subject in the state, are very different things: thus openly profane sinners are subjects in the state, but not members of the church. Communion with any church flows not from, nor hath

the least dependence upon loyalty with princes; therefore to infer the necessity of church fellowship from a dutiful obedience to civil authority, is a false, and absurd way of reasoning, good for nothing, but to deceive the hearts of the simple.

3. When any of the heathens in the Roman empire embraced the Christian religion, they dropt all religious connection with the Pagan priests, and their idolatrous worship, and joined themselves to the church of Christ, but they still continued to be dutiful subjects in the state. Now, if Seceders are inconsistent in their principles and practice, it may be said in their defence, they are *going forth by the footsteps of the flock of Christ.*

4. Fellowship with false teachers is hurtful, and often eternally ruining to the souls of men; and therefore a religious connection with them is prohibited: *Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheeps clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.* But obedience to the lawful commands of princes can neither hurt, nor ruin the souls of men; and therefore the Christians at Rome are commanded to obey the heathen emperors: *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*

Obj. 10. "The argument for subjection to the present government, drawn from the 13th chapter of the Romans, is not conclusive; for, how can such amiable qualifications as are found in the magistracy, spoken of in this passage, be applied to the heathen emperors? Can the Spirit of God mean Pagan, persecuting idolatrous princes, when he says, *Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.—He is the minister of God to thee for good.—He is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil?*"

Ans. When the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions; and the objector is not aware, that he is proving a greater than Solomon with his pretended hard questions, even the Almighty himself, as we shall see presently. And as an answer to this bold interrogation, let the following things be considered,

1. That the first verse of the 13th chapter of the Romans contains a commandment to the Christians at Rome to obey magistrates is certain; and that there were none but heathen magistrates, when they received the commandment, cannot be denied, as we formerly observed.

2. The Spirit of God expressly applies the characters, mentioned in the 3d and 4th verses, to these heathen magistrates: for, *rulers are not a terror to good works, &c.* What rulers? None surely, but these who are called the *higher powers*, and the *powers that be* in the first verse. Now, after the Spirit of God hath made such a plain application of these characters to heathen rulers, even the worst of them not excepted, it is daring presumption, in a worm sprung out of the earth to ask, Can the Spirit of God mean Pagan idolaters? The words of the apostle, in another case, are very applicable to the bold interrogator, *Who art thou, O man, that thou repliest against God?* It is just as criminal, to say to the Almighty, *Why speakest thou thus?* as to say, *Why hast thou made me thus?* We are bound to believe the words of the holy One, even when we cannot understand them.

3. The characters, mentioned by the apostle in the 3d and 4th verses, are motives to enforce the precept in the first verse; and if these characters are no way applicable to the *powers that be*, or the then heathen magistrates, I am sure, more is required than the wit of a man, to make sense of the precept.

4. The characters, in this passage, are intended to shew, what all magistrates ought to be; and, in this respect, are as applicable to heathen, as to Christian magistrates: *Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil*; that is, their office and duty is not, to punish men for their good, but for their evil works. *He is the minister of God to thee for good*; that is, the magistrate, who is God's vicegerent, ought to preserve the natural, civil, and religious rights of his subjects.

5. These characters were partly fulfilled, in the administration of the heathen emperors; and they never were, nor will be perfectly exemplified, in the administration of the best Christian rulers. Tho' the heathen magistrates

were guilty of the greatest male-administration, in suppressing the Christian religion by fire and sword, and so were a terror to good works; yet they were a terror to the evil works of thieves, murderers, and other pests of civil society: and in punishing these malefactors, according to the nature of their crimes, they were the ministers of God for good to their honest, and virtuous subjects.

Experience, as well as the Spirit of inspiration, taught Paul, that even a heathen ruler is the minister of God for good to men. A chief captain under Caesar rescued this apostle from the hands of his intended murderers; he set him on a horse, gave him a numerous guard of horse and foot, and sent him safe unto Felix the governor. Even ill princes cannot help doing a great deal of good, by preserving some degree of order and government in the world. Nebuchadnezzar was the minister of God for good to men; and therefore compared to a tree, *the leaves whereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwell in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it*, Dan. iv. 12. A certain orator, named Tertullus, spake the truth, whatever was his end, when he said to Felix the governor, *By thee we enjoy great quietness, and very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence.*—It is a maxim with some, and I see no reason to call in question the truth of it, that a bad government is better than no government. What would this world be without government, but a den of dragons, and a mountain of prey, and men upon it like the fishes of the sea, the greater devouring the lesser?

6. As high characters are given to heathen rulers in other portions of scripture, as to the Roman emperors in this. Cyrus is called *the Lord's anointed*, and Nebuchadnezzar *his servant*. *Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him*, Isa. xlv. 1. *And I will send all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon my servant, and will bring them against this land*, Jer. xxv. 9.

Obj. 11. "Paul himself calls Nero a lion; *I was delivered*, said he, *out of the mouth of the lion*, 2. Tim. ii. 9.

“ And how is it consistent to apply to the same person
 “ these two contradictory characters, *the minister of God*
 “ *for good to men, and a lion to slay the innocent?* Is there
 “ a single instance in all the word of God, where God’s
 “ moral ordinance of magistracy is exhibited under the
 “ emblem of a voracious lion?

Ans. In a former objection, we had *church fellowship*
 and *civil society* blended together; in this, the *ordinance of*
magistracy and the *magistrate* are confounded in like man-
 ner. The objector supposes here, that his opponent can-
 not apply the characters in Rom. xiii. 1,—4. to heathen
 rulers, without landing himself in this absurdity, that the
 word of God calls God’s *moral ordinance* of magistracy a
lion. Had the objector considered, that the *ordinance* of
 magistracy is one thing, and the *magistrate* another, he
 would not have exhibited so much sophistical reasoning,
 against the plain dictates of the Holy Ghost; reasoning
 which hath no other tendency, but to deceive the hearts
 of the simple.—But as an answer to the pungent questions
 of the objector, let the following things be considered.

1. It is granted, that God’s moral ordinance of magis-
 tracy is never exhibited in scripture under the emblem of
 a voracious lion, nor of any other animals ranging the fo-
 rest, and destroying to the ground their defenceless prey:
 but the scripture frequently exhibits magistrates under
 such emblems, when they pervert the end of their office,
 by male-administration. Ezekiel calls Zedekiah king
 of Judah a *profane* and *wicked* prince, chap. xxi. 25. Mi-
 cah calls the princes of Israel *king of Basban*, chap. iv. 1.
 Christ calls Herod a *fox*, Luke xiii. 32. Paul calls Nero
 a *lion*, 2 Tim. iv. 17.

2. There is no inconsistency in applying to the same
 person two characters as opposite as light and darkness, as
 heaven and hell, as Christ and Belial. Let the objector
 read his Bible with some more attention, and he will find,
 that such an application is no uncommon thing. Solo-
 mon applies to himself the opposite characters of *brutish-*
ness and *wisdom*: *I am more brutish than any man*. And,
 moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught

the people knowledge. The spouse applies to herself the opposite characters of *blackness* and *beauty*; *I am black, but comely*. Paul applies to himself the opposite characters of *weakness* and *strength*; *When I am weak, then am I strong*. Peter is described both as a *devil*, and as a *servant* and an *apostle of Jesus Christ*. Here we have a variety of examples in which two very opposite characters are applied to the same person; and there is no inconsistency in their application. Thus, for example, Peter is very justly called *Satan*, because he acted the part of the devil, in advising his blessed master not to go unto Jerusalem. And he is called a *servant* and an *apostle of Jesus Christ*, because Christ called him to the apostolic office, and because he was faithful in the discharge of it.—From these examples it is plain, that the Scripture applies very opposite characters to the same person; and that there is neither inconsistency, nor contradiction, in the application: and there is just as little inconsistency in the word of God, when it applies to the magistrate, whether he be a heathen or a Christian, these two very opposite characters, a *lion*, to slay the innocent and the *minister of God* for good to men. Nero, and other heathen emperors justly merited the character of the lion, when they shed the blood of the saints. The character of the ministers of God for good to men was due to them, when they punished evil doers, such as the thief, and the murderer, as was formerly observed.—Saul deserved the character of the *lion*, when he slew in one day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. But the character of the *minister of God* for good to Israel was applicable to him, when he fought against, and subdued their enemies.—David was one of the best of kings, a *minister of God* for good to men, but he deserved the character of a *lion* ranging the forest, and destroying to the ground the defenceless prey, when he put the Ammonites under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln.—In a word, when the magistrate perverts the end of his office, by oppressing his subjects, he is justly called a *lion*; and when he executes justice and judgment, when

he defends the poor and fatherless, and doth justice to the afflicted and needy, he is no less justly denominated, the *minister of God* for good to men. There is a mixture of good and evil in the actions of all men; and there neither is, nor can be a contradiction, in applying to the same person a disgraceful name, when he doth evil, and a good name when he doth good, for such an application is nothing else but a denomination given to a man according to his works.—The man, therefore, who sees a contradiction, in applying two opposite characters to the same person, either looks through a false medium, or has not his senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

SECTION V.

Wherein is shewed, that the Reformed Presbytery defend their cause by FALSE ACCUSATIONS.

THE reformed Presbytery have tried to defend their cause by the *sword of the Spirit*, which is the *word of God*; but, as if they had found this weapon to be unfit for their purpose, they have thrown it away, and taken to themselves the carnal weapons of *slander* and *falsehood*. In their Testimony, they testify against the Associate Presbytery, for error in doctrine, treachery in covenant, partiality and tyranny in discipline and government, for corruption in worship, and for barefacedly belying the scriptures of truth. Testimony, page 112, 155, 136. They represent Seceders as maintaining, that the people, without regard to scripture qualifications, have an essential right to choose whom they please to the exercise of civil government;—as allowing civil society a negative over the supreme Law-giver;—as exalting the will and inclination of the creature above the will of the Creator, which is the very definition of sin; Test. page 116, 118. And Mr. Thorburn, in his *Vindiciæ*, pag. 21, represents Seceders as preferring the law of nature to divine revelation, making the one an unalterable, eternal standard of morality, and the other a violable mutable kind of thing. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be

established; And what proof does the reformed Presbytery bring, to ascertain the truth of this criminal libel, which they have put into the hands of the Seceders? Why, say they, the Seceders are subject to the British government in things lawful. A mighty proof indeed! but mighty as it is, it is good for Seceders that it hath been tried, and cast long ago, at the bar of scripture, and by the approved example of the saints in the ages that are past.

If the above black catalogue of crimes and errors are the unavoidable consequences of obedience to the lawful commands of the present British government, then the Old-Testament saints were guilty of them; for they obeyed the lawful commands of the heathen kings of Babylon, of Media, and Persia. The primitive Christians were guilty of them, for they obeyed the lawful commands of heathen emperors for the space of three hundred years. All the Protestant churches at this day are guilty of them, except the Reformed Presbytery and their followers. Nay, I may add here, that, if the above crimes and errors are the necessary consequences of the practice of Seceders, our Lord himself would have been guilty of them, for its beyond all doubt, that he performed an act of obedience to Cæsar, when he paid him tribute. It is submitted here to every unprejudiced reader, if the Reformed Presbytery has not brought a false accusation, not only against Seceders, but likewise against Old-Testament saints; against New-Testament saints in primitive times; against all the saints now on the face of the whole earth, themselves and their followers excepted; and against the adored Author of the Christian religion.

SECTION VI.

They defend their Cause by downright FALSEHOODS, and gross IMPOSITIONS upon the world, and upon the oracles of the living God.

THE following quotations from their Testimony are melancholy evidences, that they have not ma-

naged their cause by the armour of truth, but by the weapon of falshood. In page 134. they assert; That the word of God acknowledges David the rightful sovereign over all Israel, for the space of forty years, 1 Chron. xxix. 26. 27.—In page 135. That David, during their rebellion of his unnatural son Absalom, was wholly ejected, both out of the hearts and territories of Israel, and not only the throne, but the will and consent of the people were given up to Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 16, 17, 18, 19.—That Adonijah had obtained the ascendancy, both in respect of actual possession, and the inclinations and consent of the majority of the nation; the consent was general, 1 Kings i. 5, 7, 9. &c. and, ii. 15.—In page 137. That David, in expectation of the Lord's promise, resisted Saul as an unjust usurper;—And that Elisha disowned Jehoram king of Israel, 2 Kings iii. 14, 15.

Let the reader consult the scriptures, upon which these assertions are founded, and he will see, if he has common sense, that they are absolutely false, and a shameful perversion of the words of the Holy One. And, is falshood a fit weapon, for defending the cause of God, and truth? no indeed; lying wonders are fit only for promoting the religion of the man of sin. I will not call the reformed Presbytery sons of Belial, but they will allow me to say, that falshood better befits the mouths of the sons of Belial, than the mouths of the ministers of Christ; *The priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.*

I conclude this section, by observing, that the reformed Presbytery should manifest their zeal for reformation, by purging out of their Testimony the old leaven of false accusations and manifest falshoods. Or rather, that they should totally expunge that part of their Testimony respecting civil government, which is near the half of it, and profess their subjection to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

SECTION VII.

Disloyalty to the just and legal Authority of Princes **REBELLION** *against God, and very HURTFUL to the RELIGION of Jesus Christ.*

HATH the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken than the fat of rams: For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry, 2 Sam. xv. 22, 23. Kings are God's vicegerents on earth, and therefore have a right to be obeyed in all things, which do not interfere with the commands of God. They are the representatives of the power and majesty of the Almighty Sovereign of the world, and therefore are called Gods. Now, as disobedience to the king's viceroy is a despising the authority of the king himself; so to refuse subjection to the just authority of princes, is to rebel against the sovereign authority of the universal Ruler: *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God*, Rom. xiii. 2. God hath written the marks of his sore displeasure on the sin of despising dominion, and speaking evil of dignities. Miriam spake against Moses, who was king in Jeshurun, and behold, she became leprous, white as snow, and as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed: *Because, the venom of her lungs, says one, would have eaten into the reputation of her brother; therefore a poisonous infection eats into her flesh.* The opening earth was at once an executioner, and a grave to rebellious Korah and his company. An oak in the wood of Ephraim was a gallows to rebellious Absalom; and thousands of his treacherous followers fell by the sword of vengeance.—These marks of the divine displeasure are recorded for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come; and they plainly shew, that he who contemns the lawful authority of his prince, by word or deed, stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty. He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick

bosses of his bucklers. Therefore let us beware of reviling the gods, and of cursing the ruler of our people: *Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.*

Disloyalty is hurtful to our *holy religion*, for hereby we expose it to the hatred of princes, and arm their power against it. If the present civil powers, provoked by disloyal principles and practices, should draw the sword against us, we will have ourselves to blame, who first began the quarrel. One hath justly observed, that if men would consult the devil himself, what course they should take to blast the honour of religion, that malicious and malignant spirit could not direct them to a more effectual method, than to turn rebels to government from a pretence of piety.

In the apostolic age the enemies of Christianity could find no such effectual calumny to sink the credit, and expose the religion of Jesus to the fury of persecutors, than this, That it was an enemy to civil government. Therefore, if we make our holy religion an argument for refusing obedience to the lawful commands of the powers that be, we join hands with its avowed adversaries; we justify their most malicious calumnies against it; and we confess it to be guilty of the most infamous thing that ever it was charged with, by the worst of its enemies, *viz.* That it lays trains of disloyal principles in the hearts of men, on purpose to blast the authority, and blow up the thrones of princes. Therefore, if Christians would not revive the ancient and hellish calumny against the city of our God, that if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom.—That this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces; if they would not bring a reproach on the religion of their blessed master, as if it taught men to despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities; and if they would not open the mouths of adversaries to blaspheme that worthy name, by the which they are called, let them hear, not what this and the other master in Israel says, nor what this and the other

act of Parliament says, but what the Spirit saith unto the churches. And the Spirit saith unto the churches, Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers: for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God, Rom. xiii. 1. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King, 1 Pet. xiii. 17. I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: for kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, 1 Tim. i. 3.

SECTION VIII.

A Summary of the Arguments for Loyalty, drawn from Scripture Precepts and Examples.

TO civil pow'rs, let great regard be giv'n;
 And human laws, that cross not those of heav'n.
 For so do sacred oracles direct,
 To higher pow'rs let ev'ry soul be subject.
 Saints, even in Rome, were taught, in lawful things,
 Meekly t' obtemperate their heathen kings.
 The precept reaches all the human clan,
 Submit to ev'ry ordinance of man.
 And that for reasons which apostles take
 From heav'n and earth, even God and conscience sake.
 While magistratic pow'rs don't tyrannize,
 But grant their sacred, civil liberties,
 Reclaimers in that case complain of ease.
 Their name is such, as few will dare applaud,
 Resisters of the ordinance of God.

Apostles orders all their flocks, and ours;
 For heav'nly ends, to stoop to earthly pow'rs;
 Nor for their want of qualities divine,
 Must we their just authority decline.
 And hence the prophet Jeremy implor'd
 King Zedekiah as his royal Lord;
 Who yet had broke his oath to Babylon,
 And to idolatry aside had gone.

Hence also Obadiah, good and great,
 Was wicked Ahab's minister of state:
 Yet in this service sacred lines record,
 That Obadiah greatly fear'd the Lord.
 Elijah too, that holy, zealous man,
 Who ne'er on Ahab, in his sins would fawn,
 Yet, most submissive, before his chariot ran.

The sacred book with special folly loads,
 All such as venture to revile the Gods.
 For (but except sons of tyrannic thrall)
 The God of heaven does rulers of the ball,
 His viceroys and anointed servants call.

Hence Paul to Cæsar his appeal display'd:
 And Christ to Cæsar will have tribute paid.

Yea, heav'n for earthly rulers pray'r exacts,
 As much as they do tribute, toll or tax.
 And hence, 'tis God's command to pray, we see,
 For all invested with authority;
 That under them we peaceful lives may lead,
 And godliness, and honesty succeed.

This precept, if we view the time, relates
 To Pagan persecuting magistrates:

For none but such possess the ruling throne,
 Till centuries of Christian years were gone.

Don't sov'reigns, then, much more our prayers claim,
 That bear the Christian Protestant's fair name?

In ancient times the man of God, 'tis said,
 For sinful Jeroboam earnest pray'd.

Moses, for wicked Pharaoh lift his eyes;
 And faithful Abram, for Abim'lech cries.

Hence holy martyrs, in their dying hours,
 Pray'd for their bloody persecuting pow'rs.

And holiest Jesus spent his dying breath
 In prayer for cruel actors in his death.
 And bids his follow'rs pray to heav'n for those
 That are their spiteful persecuting foes.
 Thus with his great example and command
 These precepts all in Judah binding stand;
 Yet Judah was a covenanted land.*



CONCLUSION.

IF we may believe the Holy Spirit, when he speaketh expressly, the cause defended in the preceeding pages is the cause of God; and therefore to testify against it, as the reformed Presbytery has done, in opposition to the plainest divine precepts, is to crucify these precepts, and to put them to open shame. *Princes*, said a weeping prophet, *were hanged up by their hand; and the faces of elders were not honoured.* This treatment of princes and elders was matter of lamentation; but it is matter of far deeper sorrow, that some of the plainest precepts of the law of Christ are held up to the derision of Infidels, by explaining away their obvious meaning, and by imposing upon them the most absurd and ridiculous sense. If our head were waters, and our eyes a fountain of tears, we could not sufficiently deplore this wound given to the holy Oracles in the house of their friends. I have no ill will at the people called *old Dissenters*; nay, I heartily wish, that their ministers may have all prosperity in preaching the gospel of peace. But I cannot wish well to their principles about civil government, unless I would shut the eye of common sense against the noon-day light of divine revelation; and unless I would set aside, as useless, the approved practice of prophets, and apostles, and the

* See Mr. Ralph Erskine's Works, vol. II. page 786. 787. folio. where the Scripture proofs are quoted, and extended at full length.

bleſſed example of the Lord Jeſus *; and therefore, tho' the reformed Preſbytery, and their followers, will not think it a compliment, yet I cordially wiſh, that the fire of their miſplaced, though well meant zeal, may be extinguished, that the veil of prejudice may be removed from their minds, when they read Moſes, and the prophets, and that they may return to *the faith which was once delivered unto the ſaints.*

If the Lord ſhall be pleaſed theſe few ſheets, ſhall be of any uſe, for preventing oppoſition to the truth as it is in Jeſus, and for confirming any in the faith of the ſcripture doctrine of obedience to the lawful commands of *the powers that be*, the labour of the writer will not be in vain in the Lord.

* If the payment of tribute to the preſent civil government is a ſin, the beſt apology, which a reformed Preſbyterian can make for paying it, may be expreſſed in the words of the Syrian general to the prophet Eliſha: *When I bow down myſelf in the houſe of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy ſervant in this thing, 2 Kings v. 18.*

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